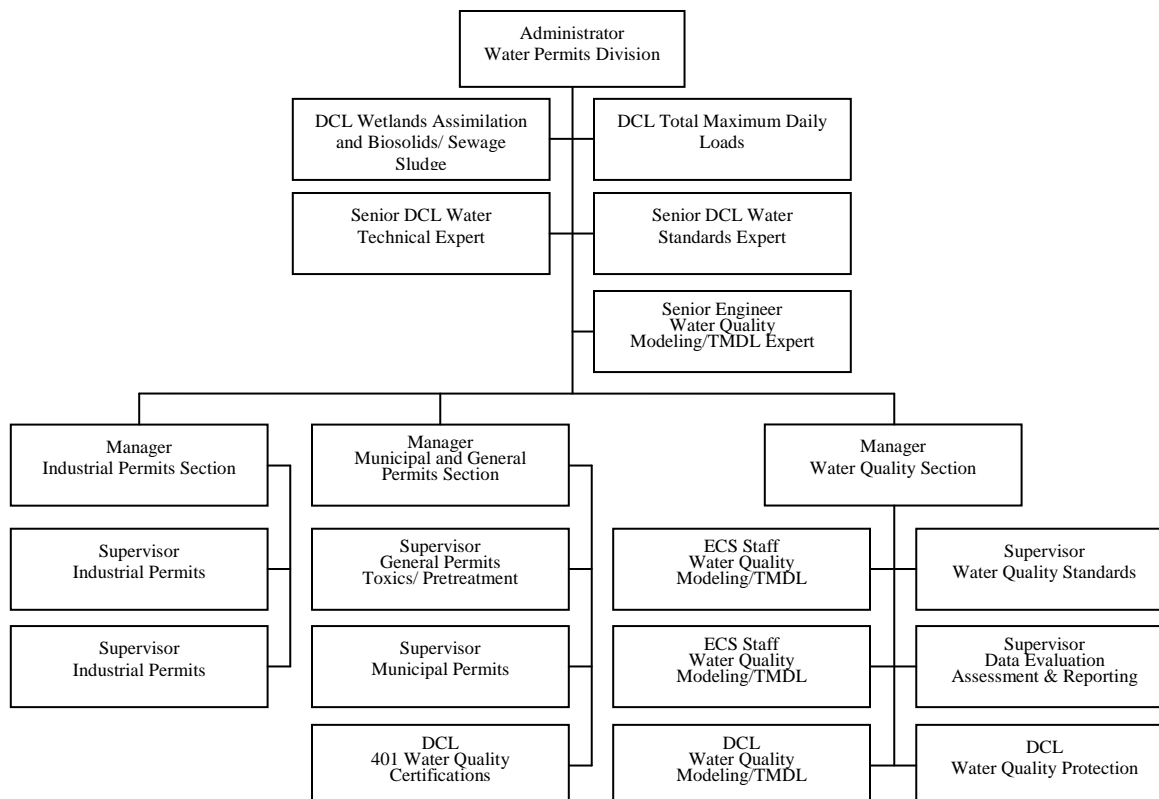


Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Water Permits Division



The Water Permits Division, a division of the Office of Environmental Services, is responsible for the issuance of Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination (LPDES) permits, biosolids/sewage sludge permits/registrations, water quality standards development, water quality assessments, water quality modeling and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), and Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certifications to Clean Water Act Section 404 permits administered by the Corps of Engineers. The Division's operations and daily activities are managed by the Division Administrator who reports to the LDEQ Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Services. The Division Administrator is responsible for coordinating: all water permitting and other related activities of the State's LPDES Program for some 13,300 permits; standards review and/or development at least every three years; assessment and reporting on state water quality at least every two years; and modeling to support required TMDL development. The Water Permits Division is comprised of 4 Sections: Industrial Permits; Municipal and General Permits, including Section 401 water quality certification activities; the Water Quality Section; and the Administrative Section, including biosolids/sewage sludge permitting and water quality modeling/TMDL experts.

The structure of the Division can be seen in the simple organizational chart below. The Environmental Scientist Staff positions are indicated by the initials "DCL":



LDEQ was delegated to issue Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permits under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program in August of 1996. LPDES permits are issued under either the **Industrial Permits Section** or the **Municipal and General Permits Section**. Once an application is received from the Permits Application and Administrative Review Group, it is routed to the proper section for development of a draft permit.

State Sewage Sludge & Biosolids Management Program: The Water Permits Division also handles the regulating and permitting of all generators of sewage sludge for the use or disposal of sewage sludge & Biosolids. This affects an estimated 4,000 domestic wastewater treatment facilities; and, also industrial facilities on a case-by-case basis. The *Standards for the Use or Disposal of Sewage Sludge & Biosolids* regulations are at LAC 33:IX.Subpart 3, Chapter 73 of the Water Quality regulations. A General Permit is being developed for facilities that dispose the generated sewage sludge in a permitted landfill. Additionally, the registration of Sewage Sludge Haulers was transferred from the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals to LDEQ on July 1, 2009. The sewage sludge haulers registered are approximately 167; and, the sewage sludge hauler and hauler vehicle requirements are also situated in Chapter 73 and the registration is also being handled by the Water Permits Division.

In conjunction with Municipal Permitting, a special category called **Wetlands Assimilation Permitting** processes permit applications for municipalities that discharge to wetlands. The facility discharges at standard secondary limitations and the additional BOD₅ and TSS loading serves to enhance the wetlands. An average of 3 wetland/overland flow (similar to wetland permitting except sampling occurs after overland flow) permits are issued per year. The Division has an active program to solicit new wetlands projects.

The Industrial Permits Section is comprised of two groups; Group 1 and Group 2. The section covers a wide range of facilities whose primary business operation is not sanitary in nature or small industrial discharges covered under general permits. However, some oil and gas operations are covered under general permits in the Industrial Permits section. The Industrial Permits Section handles a wide variety of facility types ranging from large chemical plants, refineries, and utility companies to smaller facilities like compressor stations and seafood processors. The Industrial Permits Section issues, on average, about 26 major permits per year, and about 161 minor permits per year.

Industrial Permits Group 1 handles most of the major industrial facility types, for example, chemical plants, refineries, paper mills, fertilizer plants, pesticides, and shipyards and some of the minor facility types, for example, compressor stations, gas processing plants, ethanol plants, biodiesel, and sawmills. Group 1 also handles 2 general permits, LAG 26 and LAG 33 which permit oil and gas activities in the territorial seas and the coastal region. Group 1 issues about 21 major permits, 84 minor permits (mostly oil and gas related), and around 250 general permits a year.

Industrial Permits Group 2 handles a very diverse group of permits ranging from major utility companies to minor facilities including, but not limited to, barge cleaners, oil field service facilities, bulk storage, metal processing, food processing, foundries, and grain elevators. This is not an exhaustive list, as this group processes the majority of the different types of minor permits

assigned to the Industrial Permits Section. Group 2 issues about 4 major permits, 77 minor permits, and around 650 general permits a year.

The Municipal and General Water Permits Section handles permitting for most stand alone sanitary wastewater discharges including municipalities, private sanitary wastewater discharges, wastewater from centralized wastewater treaters, and landfills/landfarms. Reissuance of 19 master general permits and authorization under those general permits is also handled by the Municipal and General Water Permits Section. The Municipal and General Water Permits Section also issues new master general permits as the need arises. The Municipal and General Water Permits Section issues about 25 majors a year (including MS4 permits) and about 80 minors a year. About 1400 general permit authorizations are also issued by the Municipal and General Water Permits Section. The Municipal and General Water Permits Section is comprised of 2 groups, **Municipal Permits Group 1** and the **General Permits, Toxics, and Pretreatment Group 2**, and an Environmental Staff Scientist to handle **401 Water Quality Certifications**.

Municipal Permits Group 1 handles all of the major and minor municipalities (Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs)) and private sanitary wastewater discharges not associated with an industrial waste water discharge. In addition the Municipal Permits Group also handles Centralized Waste Treaters and landfills/landfarms. The Municipal Permits Group issues about 500 general permits per year for authorizations under 5 general permits for sanitary discharges (POTWs and private), and construction and debris landfills.

General Permits, Toxics, and Pretreatment Group 2 handles a variety of master general permit issuance/reissuance and authorization. The General Permits, Toxics, and Pretreatment Group has 14 master general permits which have about 900 authorizations per year. A small amount of minor individual permits are also issued by this group per year, generally around 20 facilities or less. This group also processes about 40 pretreatment recommendations over a year and about 50 biomonitoring recommendations per year which is matched to overall average major permit issuance per year

401 Water Quality Certifications are also handled under the Municipal Permits Section. A 401 Water Quality Certification is required for all Corps of Engineers 404 permits which involve “discharge of fill material into the waters of the United States”. The 401 Water Quality Certification assures that any dredge and fill activity permitted under a 404 permit will be protective of site specific water quality standards. About 700 applications are received per year. Of these, 350 require certifications to be issued.

Water Quality Section is responsible for protecting water resources by setting standards, assessing water quality, and ensuring, through robust evaluation processes, that data used for standards development and water quality assessments are of appropriate type and quality.

Water Quality Standards Group 1 reviews, revises and/or develops standards on a three year basis at a minimum. Water Quality Standards are composed of designated uses, water quality criteria and anti-degradation policies to protect state waters. Uses of state waters include drinking water, recreation, and habitat for fish and shellfish. Data, literature, modeling, and national, regional, state and local information are used to refine existing or develop new standards to protect uses while not creating unnecessary treatment costs for businesses, industries and municipalities. Water quality standards provide the basis for water quality assessments, pollution allocations,

permit limits, ambient surveillance and enforcement, and pollution control strategies for unregulated pollution sources.

Data Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting Group 2 evaluates the quality of monitoring data, collected internally and/or externally, and using the data to assess water quality throughout the state. Data and information are compared to state surface water quality criteria to determine if water bodies are supporting designated uses. The quality of state waters is reported bi-annually in the Clean Water Act Section 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report.

Water Quality Modeling / TMDLs Group 3 is responsible for administering Louisiana's Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) Program. The staff actively develops TMDLs and provides review for TMDLs developed by EPA. These TMDLs are implemented through water permits (point source loads) and Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP, nonpoint source loads). TMDLs utilized by the Water Permits Division are organized into a data base maintained by the assigned DCL. There are currently about 665 TMDLs in the data base. The DCL provides guidance on implementation of TMDLs and limitations on impaired water bodies into permitting actions. WIPs are developed by staff in the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control and Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Section. Nonpoint load reductions established during TMDL development are used as guidance to establish BMPs used in the WIPs. This group is also responsible for the review of applications to withdraw surface water from state waterbodies.